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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 008244

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#) [SY](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: ARAB LEAGUE SYG MOUSSA ON IRAQ VISIT AND SECURITY  
COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS ON HARIRI INVESTIGATION

REF: A. STATE 197619 (NOTAL)

[B](#). BAGHDAD 4344

[C](#). BAGHDAD 4339

[D](#). CAIRO 8111

[E](#). STATE 192650 (NOTAL)

[F](#). CAIRO 7982 (NOTAL/NODIS)

[G](#). CAIRO 7963 (NOTAL)

[H](#). BAGHDAD 4186

Classified by Ambassador Ricciardone for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

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Summary  
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[1](#). (C) During an October 26 meeting with the Ambassador, the Arab League's Moussa briefed on his recent trip to Iraq and described planning for a preparatory meeting in Cairo in mid-to-late November. Moussa intends to invite (plus or minus) 50 Iraqis from all politically significant groups to the Cairo meeting, and will play a low-key role on agenda setting and deliberation. A senior AL envoy will travel shortly to Baghdad to make arrangements for the conference and preparatory meeting. Moussa expected that Coalition force withdrawal will feature in the talks and said that the position of the Ulema Council on this topic had recently softened. Moussa agreed that the meetings should be Iraqi-led and should not undermine the Iraqi government or the political process put in place by UNSCR 1546. Briefly discussing UN Security Council deliberations in New York (ref A) on the Hariri murder investigation, Moussa expressed hope that any UNSC resolution on the issue be confined to a criminal investigation and not be used for broader political purposes. End summary.

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Moussa Describes His Iraq Visit  
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[2](#). (C) A relaxed and visibly pleased Amre Moussa told the Ambassador that he had been "very well received by all factions" during his October 20-24 visit to Iraq. Moussa, who travelled to Baghdad, Najaf, and the north during his visit, said that his meetings with Sistani, Ulema Council head al Dhari, government representatives, and others had been very positive. "People came in the hundreds," he said to offer greetings and to be supportive of the Arab League initiative, including many senior military officers. Moussa said that he had "good chemistry" with Hakim. The only sour point, he noted, had been Moqtadr Sadr's insistence that Moussa publicly condemn terror attacks and Saddam Hussein before he would meet Moussa. The Secretary General told the Ambassador that he had dropped the meeting from his itinerary as a result, calling Sadr's effort "childish," and suggested that Ahmed Chalabi had provided Sadr with "poor advice" in this regard. Nonetheless, Moussa noted that the League would approach Sadr "at lower levels" in order to include him in the League's reconciliation efforts.

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Next Steps for the Arab League  
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[3](#). (C) Moussa said he had received broad encouragement from Iraqis during his trip to move forward on the League's "reconciliation conference" proposal, including hosting a Cairo preparatory meeting during the "second half of November." The Cairo preparatory meeting, he said, would be held at the Arab League and would include about 50--maybe 30, maybe 80--participants from various Iraqi political groups. Moussa said the League would issue invitations but he did not specify selection criteria. Participants (including all factions, women, and "some senior GOI officials"), he added, must have sufficient clout in order for their preparatory work in Cairo to elicit respect in back in Iraq. Moussa also said he had been pleased to hear Iraqi Government spokesman Leith Kuba publicly support - "two days after my departure" - wide participation in the conference, including by representatives of militant groups ("gama'at musallihat"). These details would be addressed during a visit to Baghdad by Arab League Assistant Secretary General Ahmed Ben Helli immediately after Ramadan.

[4](#). (C) Moussa confirmed that it would be entirely up to the

Iraqis to agree among themselves on the agenda - "I'll welcome the group to the League in the opening session, and then stand aside," he said. Turning to the subject of Coalition force withdrawal, Moussa told the Ambassador that he had discussed this topic at length in Iraq and expected the issue to be raised during the meeting. Moussa said he had conveyed to the Iraqis his belief that the Americans would "not attempt to veto" any discussion of the topic. Responding, the Ambassador emphasized the importance of allowing Iraqis, and not third parties, to take control of the conference. The preparatory conference, in particular, should not be a venue whereby the Iraqis feel compelled to negotiate the participation of non-Iraqis. Furthermore, he continued, it is crucial that League efforts neither undermine the current Iraqi government nor diverge from the political process outlined in UNSCR 1546. Moussa assured the Ambassador that his intention is to allow the Iraqis to "own the conference."

15. (C) Moussa reported that during his meeting with Muslim Ulema Council head Hareth al Dhari, the latter spoke of the "gradual withdrawal" of Coalition forces -- something Moussa determined to be a positive and important "new position" of Dhari's and the Council. Moussa also stressed the common complaint heard during his visit, security concerns, especially on the part of Sunni Iraqis. These groups, Moussa added, accuse the government and coalition forces of carrying out kidnappings and violent attacks targeting them--while Shiites accuse the Sunnis of similar crimes against them. It was crucial, Moussa said, for the USG to do everything it can to "alleviate some of the suffering of these people." Lastly, Moussa reported that he would travel soon (uncertain of specific timing probably not before the November meeting in Cairo) to Iran and Turkey to engage on the subject of Iraq. And, despite "continuing criticism from many quarters" over his Iraq visit, Moussa said he would remain steadfast in his efforts to facilitate Iraqi reconciliation.

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United Nations Security Council, Mehliis Report  
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16. (C) The Ambassador raised the topic of ongoing UN Security Council deliberations on Syria and the Hariri murder investigation. We provided a copy of the draft UNSC resolution on Syria (ref A), and stressed our objective, with other UNSC members, to get full and genuine Syrian cooperation with the UNIIIC. Moussa, who had not yet seen the text, conveyed his view that the UN resolution should be confined to the criminal investigation into the Hariri murder and not be used for broader political purposes. Moussa stressed his hope that future Syrian cooperation with the investigation would be "genuine." Such cooperation on Damascus' part, he said, should "take the pressure off elsewhere."

RICCIARDONE